

ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to examine the dualist legacy of epistemological inquiry in select novels of Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo. While recognizing “a turn to the body”, the thesis draws on recent developments in literary criticism and cultural theory that have focussed on the lived body’s embeddedness in the environment. Drawing on analytical perspectives from new materialism, affect studies, cognitive poetics and critical posthumanism, among other allied disciplines, this dissertation situates the body in a network of encounters. To this end, the thesis (a) foregrounds a dialectic against the singular and bounded idea of the body, and (b) revisits contact zones and interfaces that inscribe corporeal entanglements. By focusing on the existential and experiential categories of mind, matter and meaning, the thesis investigates the transgressive borderline between the organic and the inorganic, the visceral and the virtual, the corporeal and the cultural conditions. In other words, it interrogates embodied spaces, mediated social relations and the making and unmaking of the subject in DeLillo and Pynchon’s work: *Gravity’s Rainbow* (1973), *White Noise* (1985), *The Body Artist* (2001), *Cosmopolis* (2003) and *Bleeding Edge* (2013). It engages with literary narrative as a medium of representation offering complex and fictional matrix where a dialectic is articulated. The conceptual framework of ‘entanglement’, the thesis argues, espouses a philosophical position to revise and revisit the dominant epistemologies of our time. Pynchon and DeLillo’s fiction, as we shall see, participates in this to convey a production of possibilities by imagining alternate forms of representation. The dissertation recognises the unique perspective offered by trans-disciplinary criticism and anticipates frames for future research.

Keywords: body, entanglement, corporeality, human, technology, embodiment